

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a gross abuse of power. it is not news but an illegal campaign contribution to Bush-Cheney. This shows clearly the dangers of media consolidation. One owner can pressure many stations to air whatever is in the interest of this owner, in this case Sinclair. Sinclair however uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. By airing a propaganda piece they claim is a documentary they are using public airwaves to influence the democratic process. This is not what public media is suppose to do. When large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Sinclair should not pressure its stations to air something produced for propaganda with the purpose of smearing a candidate so as to get the candidate preferred by the owner of the network elected. It should be more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter. Sinclair's actions show why it is important to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.